The Lost Columbine—

One of the Series of Complete Stories on "Marriage" By America's Leading Authors

——By Julian Street

A GLIMPSE OF JULIAN STREET

OF ALL the many qualities that belong to Julian Street the one I think that impresses you most is youth. He has the kind of youth that is progressively permanent—he is cast in an ageless mold. He has the personality that years spent in genuine craftsmanship bring—and he has worked hard for his success. "Pegging away," is what he calls it.

Oh yes, he sold his first story out of hand, and he has been selling constantly ever since, but that means real labor and toil. He is unhurried, seemingly almost slow in his method of procedure, but he arrives very firmly, and always you feel in him the power to keep on arriving—the ability to better his many achievements.

There is about him, too, the knowledge of the big author who sees directly, and feels sharply the deeper things, but his great talent lies in treating facts, if it be books of travel he is writing, or people, if it be stories, with a certain inimitable charm that is entirely his own.

All of his work shows the keenness of fine observation—little truisms, subtile points in characterization—and the interest to keep you reading to the end.

"The Lost Columbine," written expressly for the ALL-STAR PROGRAM OF AMERICAN FICTION, delicate in plot, is yet poignantly full of meaning—it holds a special interpretation for both men and women.

MARY STEWART CUTTING, JR.

"ABOUT this fancy-dress ball at the country club tonight," said Archibald Welkins, as his wife, looking very lovely in a French blue house dress, poured the morning coffee, "I don't quite like the idea, do you, Eleanor?"

Her large blue eyes turned up to him inquiringly.

"What don't you like about it, dear?" she asked.

"Oh, this fool notion of husbands and wives dressing separately—not knowing about each other's costumes."

Often in the eight years of their married life he had been disturbed by her trait of remaining silent when she disagreed with him, and now, as she did not reply, he stated more explicitly what was in his mind, saying: "I think we'd better tell each other what we're going to wear."

"We'll find out when we unmask," she said.

"But I think the idea of secrecy is all nonsense," he insisted with a little show of heat.

"Pass Mr. Welkins the marmalade," his wife said to the maid.

He helped himself, then repeated: "I think it's all nonsense."

But she did not answer. He had never known a woman with Eleanor's capacity for silence. It gave her a mysterious power.

"The steward at the club told me they'd had over 500 acceptances," he went on. "That means a mixed crowd, and I'd like to know what your costume is going to be so I can look after you."

"That's sweet of you," she answered, "but I'm sure I shan't need looking after."

"You might," he declared.

"Oh, I don't think so—not at our own country club."

"But I tell you it's going to be a mixed crowd. You're a darn pretty woman—and a blonde." And, as again she was silent, he added in a tone that held a hint of accusation: "Blondes always attract more attention."

"Take some hot toast," she said to him as the maid appeared. He took some, and waited till she left the room. Then he said:

"I wonder why men always think good-looking blondes are——" But he did not finish the sentence.

"Are what?" she asked.

"Well, anyway," he declared, "fancy dress makes people reckless. They feel that the lid's off. There'll be a lot of flasks, too. There's so much more drinking since prohibition. That's another reason why I want to know."

"Know what?"

"What?" he repeated irritably. "Just what I've been asking you—what you're going to wear."

"I don't think it would be playing the game to tell," she said. "How do you like this bacon? It's a new brand."

"Look here," he said sharply, "you can't put me off that way! You say you don't need looking after, but your memory doesn't seem to be so good as mine! Before your flirtation with that dolled-up French officer you fell for I used to think you didn't need looking after, too. But I guess I——" He stopped.

Having thrown in her face the one indiscretion of her married life, he instantly regretted it. He always did. He always told himself that to keep referring to it was to take a mean advantage of her, and that he would never speak of it again. Strange that he could not overcome the jealousy left with him by that episode of several years ago, when, ever since, she had been so circumspect. After all it had been only a mild flirtation, and the Frenchman wasn't very young. He was a fool to keep thinking of it, and a greater fool to harp upon it.

He said no more, but left the table, angry with her and with himself.

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IN the interest of secrecy it had been arranged that the wives should dine and dress together in certain houses in the neighborhood, while the husbands dined and dressed in others, and that all should arrive at the club masked. Archibald Welkins consequently left the limousine to be used by his wife and her friends, and taking the bag containing his costume, which was supposed to make the wearer resemble King Charles II, drove in his roadster to Tom Bayne's house, where he found a group of men, some of them already to their finery, some dressing, all with cocktail glasses in their hands.

By the time he had donned the regal wig and knee breeches and drunk three cocktails, he began to change his mind about the fancy dress ball. It was an amusing idea, this secrecy. He was going to have a good time. Nevertheless, when he asked Eleanor what she was going to wear she should have told him. He still felt some resentment about that.

Tom Bayne had an excellent cellar. With dinner he served large highballs, and his Scotch was exceptionally good. As Archibald Welkins was leaving the house with the others he caught his reflection in a mirror and approved thereof. The jeweled star shone brilliantly upon his breast; the black silk stockings admirably set off his legs, and the long dark, curly wig gave him, he thought, a mysterious appearance. What did he care, after all, about Eleanor's refusal to tell him what her costume was to be? He wasn't going to worry about Eleanor tonight. Not he! He had offered to—that was enough. She didn't know what he was wearing, either. Yes, he was going to have a good time!

With an Arab sheik, a Chinaman and a soldier in the buff and blue of the Continental Army as his passengers, he drove to the club, handling his roadster dashingly, and to avoid being recognized by his car, parked beside the drive at some distance from the door and walked with his companions to the clubhouse.

The doors and the French windows were open; dancing had already started; they could hear the music as they walked across the grass. Inside the ballroom door Welkins paused to review the animated spectacle. Masked soldiers, clowns coolies, court beauties, bull-fighters, odalisques, woman jockies, geisha, harlequins, cowboys, Spanish senoritas, mandarins, pirates, nymphs, Turks, vaqueros, peasants whirled to the music of the jazz band.

Looking them over as they circled past he presently thought he recognized his wife. She was dressed—if, indeed, it was Eleanor—as a French court lady, with patches, a high, powdered wig and a panniered gown of flowered silk, and was dancing with a Roman gladiator. He watched her around the room. Her height, her figure, her carriage were Eleanor's, and the costume had a dignity characteristic of his wife's taste. When she had passed several times he was quite certain of her.

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PRESENTLY he became interested in Cleopatra, who fox-trotted into view with Napoleon. Eleanor would have made a handsome Cleopatra, too, but he felt sure she would never appear in public in such scant attire.

That Cleopatra woman was certainly attractive, though! He cut in on her and, as they danced, talked in a false voice, endeavoring to guess at her identity. But the fair Egyptian was popular. An Indian rajah soon snatched her away, leaving King Charles II free to seek out a fascinating Columbine who, several times, had passed near him in a dance and seemed responsive to his glances.

Presently, with a beau of the colonial period, she came down the floor, a sprightly figure in a short black satin dress with a waist cut to a deep V in back, springy little skirts, thin openwork stockings and ballet slippers. With her huge white ruff and her black cocked hat pulled down at a saucy angle over bobbed red hair, she looked the incarnation of irresponsible gayety.

He cut in and found that her dancing confirmed his impression. How light, how responsive she was!

"I've been aiming to catch you," he told her, disguising his voice by pitching it low.

"'Ave you, monsieur?" she chirped. "Well, zen, we are sympathique, for I too, 'ave look at you, you beeg, 'andsome man!" The minx! She gave his hand a squeeze, which he promptly returned.

"Are you French?" he asked in his assumed voice, "or are you putting on that accent?"

"W'at you sink, monsieur?"

"I think," he said, "that if you're putting it on you do it very well."

"An' you, you bad, weeked king! 'Ow is your Nell Gwyn?" she asked.

"Never mind Nell Gwyn," he said. "It's you I'm interested in. Don't tell me you're just a nice little married woman in disguise—wife of some man who commutes to business in New York and drives a ball around these links on Sundays."

"You 'ope I'm real naughty Franch girl?" she asked, archly.

"Indeed I do!"

"Well 'zen, follow me!" And with that she disengaged herself and flitted swiftly through a French window leading to the terrace.

Pursuing, he lost her momentarily, for in the darkness her black dress gave her an advantage; but as she scampered down the steps toward the lawn and the links he caught sight of her white ruff, and sped after her. As she disappeared behind a large syringa bush he heard a rippling laugh, and running to the other side, caught her in his arms. Then, as she was panting and laughing, and as it was dark, and they were masked, and the syringas smelled so sweet, he placed his hand beneath her chin, tilted it up, bent over, and was about to seize the fruits of victory, when she eluded him and ran off laughing, in the direction of the drive.

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A PRISONER who escapes and is recaptured pays an added penalty, and when after another chase over the silver-green of moonlight grass, Charles II grasped the elusive Columbine, and exacted what he deemed just tribute from her lips, he was surprised and flattered by the apparent willingness with which she paid.

Indeed, it was that willingness which made him confident that she would not again become a fugitive, and he was holding her lightly when, in a flash, she was off once more, this time running toward the clubhouse.

Just at the doorway he caught up, but his appeal to her to stay outside was unavailing.

"No," she said, firmly, "you are a naughty boy; an' I 'ave foun' you out. My 'usban' would not like."

"Your husband does not need to know," he urged, "nor my wife, either. That's what makes a party of this kind such fun, husbands and wives not knowing one another's costumes."

"Yes," said she, "but I 'ave already 'ad fun enough, my king." And with that she moved into the ballroom.

By the door they stood for a moment watching the dancers.

"Look!" he exclaimed suddenly. "There's another Columbine. She's like you—exactly like you—even to her red hair!"

"Yes, we came togezzer."

"But suppose I were to lose you," said he, "how could I find you again? How could I tell the two of you not knowing each other's costumes apart?"

"Zat is a question!" she said.

"Let's dance and talk it over."

"No, monsieur," replied the Columbine, "now I mus' dance wiz some wan else." As she spoke a cowled monk came up, and in a moment she was dancing off with him.

"Meet me here afterwards," urged King Charles, as she moved away.

But she shook her head.

"How shall I find you, then?" he demanded, following.

"I don't sink you can!" said she, and again he heard her tantalizing laugh.

He retired to the doorway and watched for her, but by the time she came around again she was with a Sicilian brigand. He cut in. But apparently this was the other Columbine, for she did not seem to know him. Her step was not so light as that of the one he sought, nor did she speak with a French accent.

Never mind! He would find his lost Columbine. He was determined to find her. And when they unmasked he would learn who she was.

* * * *

TIME and again, when he saw a Columbine wearing a black cocked hat over bobbed red hair, he cut in and danced with her, but only to be disappointed. Always it was the wrong one. He questioned her about the other, but could get no satisfaction.

When, at midnight, the dancers unmasked he hastened about the ballroom and the adjacent apartment, looking for the Columbines, but now he could find neither of them. Nor could he find his wife, nor yet the white-wigged lady of the French court whom he had identified with her.

Where could Eleanor be? She ought to be in the ballroom. That was where a well-behaved married woman belonged at a party such as this. It wasn't wise for a pretty woman to go wandering about outside, in the moonlight, with a strange man, masked. Since prohibition there had been a lot of drinking, and fancy dress made people reckless, anyway. Temporarily he forgot the Columbine in his concern about his wife's behavior, as he looked for her upon the terrace and the lawn.

Failing to find her, he returned to the club and telephoned home.

"Hello?" He was surprised to hear Eleanor's voice upon the wire.

"I've been hunting for you all over the place," he said, "what took you home so early?"

"Oh, I get enough of it!"

"Didn't you have a good time?"

"I had an exceptionally good time," she assured him.

"But I don't understand why you went home, then?"

"Fancy dress makes people do all sorts of things," she said, and before he could comment upon the cryptical character of the remark she asked: "Have you been enjoying yourself?"

"Oh, I've had worse times," said he. And, thinking to have one final look for his lost Columbine, he added: "I guess I'll hang around for a while if you don't mind."

"No, I don't mind at all. Goodnight, dear," and she hung up the receiver.

* * * *

"WELL, dear," said Archibald Welkins, next morning, as his wife, looking very lovely in a shell-pink house gown, poured the coffee, "it was a pretty good party, wasn't it?" And as she nodded, he went on in an expansive tone: "Made it rather amusing, after all—husbands and wives not knowing each other's costume—don't you think so?"

"Yes, very amusing," she said.

"I was quite sure I recognized you," he told her.

"Oh, were you?" She looked up quickly.

"Yes, in a French court costume with a high-powdered wig."

When she smiled and shook her head he was surprised.

"That wasn't you—honestly?"

"No, honestly."

"What was your costume, then."

"I went as a Columbine," she said, and addressing the maid: "Pass Mr. Welkins the strawberry jam."

In silence he helped himself spread jam upon a piece of toast, ate it, and drank his coffee. Then:

"There were two Columbines dressed exactly alike," he ventured.

"Yes," said Eleanor. "This is the last of that new bacon. Have you made up your mind yet how you like it?"

"Oh, it's very good," he answered abstractedly. "But the Columbines I saw had red hair."

"Wigs," she returned succinctly.

"Wigs?" he repeated, surprised. "They didn't look like wigs."

"Men aren't very quick at detecting such things," said she. Then, to his infinite surprise, she added: "Do you remember that nice French officer I liked so much three years ago?"

"Why, yes."

"Well, he wore a toupee."

"He did? How do you know?"

"I noticed it the first time I saw him."

"Um," he said, and sat reflective for a time. Then: "Look here, dear," he went on. "Let's never speak of that French officer again. It was long ago, and anyway it really didn't amount to anything."

If he expected recognition of this magnanimity he was disappointed, for she did not speak.

"Who was the other Columbine?" he asked in a casual tone as he was about to rise from table.

"Evidently some one who went to the same costumer I did," his wife replied.

"But——" He checked himself, then with some feeling, added: "I don't think they ought to send out duplicate costumes for the same party, do you?"

But she failed to reply.

Often in the eight years of their married life he had been disturbed by her trait of remaining silent when she disagreed with him. He had never known a woman with Eleanor's capacity for silence. It gave her a mysterious power.

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"YES," SHE SAID, "BUT I 'AVE ALREADY 'AD FUN ENOUGH, MY KING."

Why Ambassador Harvey Wore Knee Breeches

BY WINIFRED MALLON.

THE "plush breeches" of Ambassador Harvey, his reported appearance in them and wearing a sword at Princess Mary's wedding and his alleged "decision" not to wear them again, will not become an international incident after all, nor will it lead to the recall of the ambassador for failing to wear the "simple dress of an American gentleman" on this and similar occasions.

It is a pity to spoil a good story, but the breeches worn by an American ambassador at London are not of plush, are worn only at court functions and social occasions at which royalty is present, and never at levees or when he presents his letters of credence or recall; nor is a sword worn, or a cocked hat. Furthermore, the ambassador is not in a position to decide what he will wear on such occasions, the only decision open to him being to wear the required costume and go or refuse to wear it and remain from court functions to which he is invited.

"Otherwise," it was admitted at the State Department, "the story as reported was substantially correct."

Court dress has been worn by every American minister and ambassador at London and by American diplomats at many other European courts ever since the foundation of this republic, court dress being not a uniform, but a recognition of the right of each court to indicate the costume to be worn by guests invited to its ceremonies and functions.

* * * *

SINCE 1867, when Congress prohibited persons in the diplomatic service "from wearing any uniform or official costume not previously authorized by Congress," the "uniform" of an American diplomat has been and is a full-dress suit, in which he must appear on any occasion demanding "uniform" by day as well as by night. Thus attired, Dr. William Miller Collier, when ambassador to Spain, awaited with his "cher colleagues" in the gray dawn of a May morning in 1907 the birth of an heir to the throne of Spain, a court requirement at Madrid being the attendance at the palace of the diplomatic corps in full regalia to receive the announcement from the king or the court chamberlain.

An American minister or ambassador wears his dress suit when he presents his credentials, always an afternoon affair; when he goes to the station to welcome or to speed on his way a member of the royal family, unless he has previously received an intimation that other dress may be worn, and on all other occasions when other members of the corps appear in uniform.

The "court dress" worn by American ambassadors to Great Britain is authorized by a State Department regulation in recognition of the fact that it is required at London as it formerly was required at many other European posts, and is not a "uniform." Even diplomats wearing diplomatic uniform appear in knee breeches at balls, receptions and other court social functions where the queen is present, and at dinners or other entertainments attended by members of the royal family. On such occasions court dress is indispensable, both for ladies and gentlemen, or full uniform for officers of the army and navy. Precedence and ceremonial at the court of St. James is no trifling matter, but part and parcel of the law of England, subsisting under the authority of acts of parliament, decrees in courts of justice, or public instructions proceeding from the crown. The earliest statute on the subject of precedence is the thirty-first orf Henry VIII.

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IMPASSIONED patriots who consider that Ambassador Harvey bertayed the high traditions of his country by appearing at Princess Mary's wedding and on other occasions in knee breeches will be even more greatly shocked over the fact that the costume worn at court at the present time by Americans and British subjects alike, other than those in the military and naval service, was devised by Mr. Buchanan, American minister at London in 1853. Mr. Buchanan, however, included a sword and cocked hat.

Frock dress, worn by members of the American embassy at courts, state balls and evening and state parties, dinners and receptions now consists of black evening dress coat, lapelled black or white evening dress vest, breeches of plain black evening dress material, with three small black cioth or silk buttons and small jet or black buckles at the knees; black silk hose, plain court shoes with bows, no buckles; white evening dress bow tie and white gloves and an opera hat. Evening dress with trousers is worn at levees at which the king receives and the queen is not present.

Gentlemen not of the diplomatic corps, army or navy wear coats and knee breeches of black silk velvet, the former single-breasted with standing collar and the latter with three small steel buttons and steel buckles at the knees; white satin or black silk velvet waistcoat, black silk hose and black patent leather shoes with steel buckles; a black beaver or silk cocked hat with a steel loop on a black silk cockade or rosette; a sword with steel hilt, black scabbard and steel mounting, and a sword belt of black silk web worn under the waistcoat with black velvet frog for the sword; white bow necktie and white gloves. At levees trousers of black silk velvet may be worn.

The only departure from the required court dress at an evening function in London was on the occasion of the dinner given for President Wilson when he was a guest at Buckingham Palace. Mr. Wilson had no knee breeches in his outfit, and in courtesy to him the king, for the first time in his life, appeared at a state dinner in evening dress, all the gentlemen, other than officers of the army and navy, invited for the occasion, which brought together one of the most distinguished companies ever entertained at the British court, having been instructed to do likewise.

* * * *

THERE was a time when American diplomats had their own uniform and prescribed court dress, but it was no such modest and unassuming costume as the one worn today at London. The following "memorandum of the dress of an American minister, as fixed by the mission to Ghent," is contained in a State Department circular, dated November 6, 1817:

"A blue coat, lined with white silk; straight-standing cape, embroidered with gold, single-breasted, straight or round buttonholes slightly embroidered; buttons plain, or, if they can be had, with the artillerists' eagle stamped upon them, i. e., an eagle flying with a wreath in its mouth, grasping lightning in one of its talons; cuffs embroidered in the manner of the cape; white cassimere breeches; gold knee buckles; white silk stockings and gold or gilt shoe buckles; a three-cornered chapeau bras, not so large as those used by the French nor so small as those of the English; a black cockade, to which lately an eagle has been attached; sword, etc., corresponding.

"The secretaries have the same costume, with the exception that their coats have less embroidery than that of the minister.

"It is usual at all European courts on what are called gala days, such as birthdays of the sovereign, marriages of princes of his family and other extraordinary occasions, for the foreign ministers, as well as other persons of distinction connected with the court, to appear in uniforms more splendid with embroidery than upon occasions of ordinary levees, drawing rooms and diplomatic circles. A decent respect for the usages of the courts and a suitable compliance with forms there established make it proper that the minister of the United States should adopt this custom and wear on those occasions a coat similar to that above described, but embroidered round the skirts and down the breasts, as well as at the cuffs and cape, all the other parts of the dress remaining the same. The coats to be distinguished as the great and the small uniform. There should be a white ostrich feather or plumet in the minister's hat, not standing erect, but sewed round the brim."

John Quincy Adams in 1823, referring to the engraved design then used on the uniform worn by ministers of the United States at foreign courts on occasions when full dress was required, commented that "this uniform was adopted for the convenience of using the same dress upon all necessary occasions and at every court.

"The use of it," he added, "is in no case prescribed by this government, and every minister of the United States abroad may wear at his discretion any dress conformable to the customs of the place where he may reside."

Within the next few years the American dress was toned down considerably. Mr. Van Buren, Secretary of State in 1829, in a circular to the diplomatic agents of the United States, instructing them that "from a suitable respect to what is understood to be the usage at the several courts of Europe," President Jackson suggested as the dress to be used by our ministers and other diplomatic agents upon established occasions: "A black coat with a gold star on each side of the collar near its termination; the under clothes to be black, blue or white, at the option of the wearer; a three-cornered chapeau de bras; a black cockade and eagle, and a steel-mounted sword with a white scabbard."

In 1853 Secretary of State Marcy sent a circular instruction to each member of the American diplomatic service, stating that "the department would encourage, as far as practicable without impairing his usefulness to his country, his appearance at court in the simple dress of an American citizen. Should there be cases where this cannot be done, owing to the character of the foreign government, without detriment to the public interest, the nearest approach to it compatible with the due performance of his duties is earnestly recommended."

That instruction opened a Pandora's box of trouble for the American diplomats.

* * * *

UP to that time the American ministers had conformed to custom at each court, including Franklin, who had worn "Quaker full dress, being court dress in the times of Charles II," at the French court, except on one occasion, when, not owing to any love of simplicity on his part, but to his having no clothes in which he considered it fit to appear, he was requested, his presence being much desired, to come in whatever he happened to be wearing at the moment.

In London Buchanan was informed by Sir Edward Cust, master of ceremonies, that while her majesty would receive Mr. Buchanan at court in any dress he chose to put on, he did not doubt that it would be disagreeable to her if he did not conform to the established usage, and that he, of course, could not expect to be invited to court balls or to court dinners where all appeared in costume. Mr. Buchanan then decided to wear neither gold lace nor embroidery, but a modified court dress. Before he had devised one, however, parliament was opened by the queen in person, every member of the diplomatic corps receiving a printed circular containing the sentence: "No one can be admitted into the diplomatic tribune or in the body of the house but in full court dress." Buchanan did not attend the ceremony, and his absence became the subject of outcry in the London press, and was with difficulty prevented from becoming the subject of inquiry and remark in the house of commons.

The question was finally settled to Buchanan's entire satisfaction, and he reported to Marcy on February 24, 1854: "I appeared at the queen's levee on Wednesday last in the very dress which you have often seen me wear at the President's levees, with the exception of a very plain black-handled and black-hilted dress sword, and my reception was all that I could have desired." He had first thought, he added, of United States buttons, "but a plain dress sword has a more manly and less gaudy appearance. As the 'simple dress of an American citizen' is exactly that of the upper court servants, it was my purpose from the beginning to wear something which would distinguish me from them."

In 1858 the following dress was agreed to with Mr. Dallas, Buchanan's successor: "At levees a suit of black evening clothes, with white neckcloth, sword and cocked hat, and at drawing rooms or other full-dress occasions with breeches and buckles."

At Paris, Vienna and Madrid the American ministers were having similar experiences. J. M. Daniel, writing from Turin in December, 1854, referred to the "endless tail of the diplomatic coat," and reported that on being formally requested to call at the foreign office he found that they had interrogated their ministers at all the courts as to the dress worn by American diplomats, "finding that Mr. Buchanan wore his tights and sword, that Mr. Jackson at Vienna dressed like a militia colonel, and that Mr. Vroom at Berlin was wearing court dress, the King of Prussia having made it known that he would not consider an appearance before him without costume respectful."

WEDDING BELLS, C.O.D.

(Continued from Second Page.)

with Tolin and Brown's names and your writing on it."

He produced the paper from an inside pocket.

Edwards wilted completely. Brown and Tolin shrugged their shoulders in abject disgust and walked slowly away. O'Brien approached Edwards as the latter shrank in his shoes. There was no menace or any inkling of hard feeling in O'Brien's manner, but Edwards felt something coming. He half closed his eyes and unconsciously stiffened and braced himself in the manner of a coward expecting a punch on the jaw.

"Well, Eddie"—O'Brien was mildness personified, though there was a small note of raillery in his voice—"we learned something today, didn't we?"

"Wha—what do you mean?" queried Edwards.

"We learned," said O'Brien, a twinkle coming into his eyes, "that it pays to play even a crooked game straight."

"What you talkin' about?"

"I'm talking about you boys telling Tolin to go ahead and double-cross me that first heat."

"We—where do you get that stuff?" Edwards attempted a bluff, blustering manner, but caved in under it when O'Brien quietly replied:

"I get it from the same place where you got all the money you were betting. As far as you are concerned, that place seems to be headquarters."

"Damn that fool girl!" Edwards swore under his breath.

"Wait a minute—none of that," O'Brien said sharply. "I'm sorta crazy about that girl, and we won't have any talk. I'm just telling you this—you've got to dig up some money somewhere and buy back your dirty shop from her—and quick, too! She may be leaving town in a few days and she ought to have her money."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" asked Edwards sarcastically.

"Never mind what it is. You get busy. And listen—if I were you, I'd never say anything about this race. The judges would bar half a dozen men for less than the notes on this bill of lading. Good-bye, Eddie!"

O'Brien offered his hand, but the crestfallen barber-sportsman, shuddering, turned away, swearing as he went.

* * * *

O'BRIEN found his Irish girl after a long search standing listlessly in front of Willie the Fat Boy's tent.

"Looking for another fat guy?" asked the sheriff, nervously attempting a smile. The resolution before which Edwards had quailed melted under her hot, indignant eyes.

"If I find one, you can bet he won't be shanty Irish!" she retorted.

"Now, now, listen," O'Brien stumbled.

"You thought I was in on their game trying to double-cross you, didn't you? After I'd fair been flingin' myself at you, like the shameless creature I am!"

"Now, now!"

"Well, now what?" she demanded.

"Now I've got sense," and the sheriff found his grin. "Will you let me tell you how worked up I was over this race, and you and the money and the gang of pirates led by our Mr. Edwards? Will you now? And how sorry I am for bein' so blind I misunderstood you?"

"I might listen." She relented somewhat. "But I'm not sayin' how much I'll believe."

"Believe it or not."

O'Brien smiled broadly as he took her arm and they started off down the midway. The rest of his remarks were lost, along with them, in the thick Canton crowd. When next discovered they were standing in the thronged art hall watching a country bumpkin and his blushing bride sweat and stammer through a public wedding ceremony."

"That," said O'Brien masterfully, "would be a fine thing for you and me, Bess."

She blushed tremendously.

"This is so sudden—I mean"—and it was her turn to stammer—"this is so public, Billy."

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Platinum and Diamonds.

IT is agreed that the diamond is not only displayed more advantageously in a platinum than in a gold mounting, but also is more secure if set in the first mentioned of these two most precious of the metals.

As to the chances of loss being reduced to a minimum by platinum it has been found from a chain of alternating links of gold and platinum that a few years sufficed to wear the gold links through, while the platinum links to all appearances remained as perfect as when first received.

As to display the experts hold that the peculiar properties of platinum are eminently adapted to bring out the snap and fire that are the life of the diamond. These should not be counteracted or hindered in any way, they say, and that it is the best mounting, therefore, which aids them and thus guarantees their best effects.

Platinum, moreover, is a non-tarnishing metal. It is not affected by atmospheric conditions and holds its whiteness for all time. Not even high-quality gold, of course, is non-tarnishable. The platinum-mounted gems are ever ready for the wearer, requiring little if any special cleaning month in and month out, while gold takes on a sorry looking color after being worn only a short time.

A study of the light refracting qualities of the diamond shows that the color of the mounting at the girdle of the stone, where metal and gem come in contact, determines very appreciably what the prevailing hue of the diamond will be. The white of the platinum contact stimulates the native brilliance of the diamond, the yellow of the gold tinges it with its own hue and dulls it. Moreover, so the argument continues, the white of the platinum helps to soften when it does not overcome the yellowness of an inferior diamond while the yellowness of gold serves to intensify the inferior diamond's poor shading.

Platinum, of course, would not be more expensive than gold if it did not have superior qualities, and suitability for diamond mountings is one of them, just as gold is not so much more expensive than silver without very good reasons and so on down the long line to the base metals.

But the setting need not be all platinum. There is what is called the platinum-tipped setting which reduces the cost of platinum setting considerably without sacrifice of any of the advantages. This result is produced by buckling and soldering a piece of platinum on the ends of the prongs in such a way as to insure permanency of the platinum, as well as give the stone the proper color influence where most needed, namely, at the girdle or point of contact.

Growth of Mahogany.

THE observations of the conservator of forests for southern Nigeria, held to be an eminent authority in the matter, indicate that the mahogany tree grows much more rapidly than the number of so-called annual rings suggests. He thinks that they show three or four well marked zones of growth each year, corresponding to the four seasons. Both forest trees and those grown in the botanical garden exhibit the same phenomenon. On the site of the town of Ijaye, destroyed sixty years ago, a forest has grown up containing mahogany trees with trunks exceeding ten feet in girth.